

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 794

CS 204 933

AUTHOR Veal, L. Raxon
TITLE Evaluation in English Teacher Preparation: Something or Nothing?
PUB DATE Mar 79
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the combined Annual Meeting of the Conference on English Education and Secondary School English Conference (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 15-18, 1979).
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Research; *Effective Teaching; *English Education; Evaluation Criteria; Higher Education; Research Criteria; Research Needs; *Research Problems; *Teacher Behavior; *Teacher Education; *Teacher Evaluation

ABSTRACT

The role played by evaluation is important in models or designs for research in English teacher preparation. English educators must rely on general studies of teacher effectiveness for what little is known about evaluating teachers and for designs or models of research on English teacher preparation. Whatever the classification scheme of the teacher effectiveness variables, the aim and chief difficulty in evaluating teacher preparation programs lies in isolating and controlling a small enough number of factors to determine effects among them. A more "open" interpretation of results than has been offered would look beyond statistics, indicating a need for reinterpretation and for new studies specifically applying to English. New categories around which to classify and organize studies include the following: the teacher's formative experiences as manifest in teaching behaviors, teaching performance as manifest in teaching behaviors, teacher effects on student achievement, conditions existing within the learning environment, and immediate and long range effects of teacher behaviors on learners. (DF)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

ED173794

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
L. Ramon Veal

EVALUATION IN ENGLISH TEACHER PREPARATION:
SOMETHING OR NOTHING?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Evaluating prospective teachers of English is a major concern of the Conference on English Education. Occasionally, there are convention sessions devoted to it, and English Education, the CEE publication, has included at least ten to twelve articles on it in the last five years. Evaluation certainly has a place in instruction, in administration or management, in research, and probably in many other areas. Today, though, we are primarily interested in the role evaluation can play in models or designs for research in English teacher preparation.

The question posed in the title of this paper, "Evaluation--Something or Nothing?" is intended to suggest that our collective experience in evaluating teachers and teacher education programs provides us with something; more than nothing, maybe not much more, but something.

As already noted, English Education has recently included approximately twelve articles related to evaluation in English teacher preparation. This amounts to about eight percent of the more than 130 articles published during the last five years. And the rather considerable range of the articles includes such matters as accountability, tests for teachers, teachers' evaluation of students, national assessment, sample programs, and others. Certainly not an in-depth treatment of evaluation but still something.

Books, monographs, and other publications listed in the 78-79 NCTE "Resources" catalog include very little on evaluating teachers or teacher education programs. And the current editor of Research in The

CS204 933

Teaching of English, Roy O'Donnell, has reported that only sixteen of the 174 articles published in the first ten volumes of RTE relate to evaluation in general, with one, maybe two, relating to teacher evaluation in particular. Again, something, but not much from NCTE's two major relevant journals.

Although comprehensive empirical studies of English teacher preparation are surely limited, we (the profession, NCTE) have provided some assistance or guidance. The NCTE "Statement" on the preparation of teachers of English has been widely disseminated and has been discussed and shared here. When used as it should be, a college or university, a school system, or a state department of education would use the "Statement" for just what it is--a carefully distilled listing of teacher qualifications, experiences for teachers, and even issues. As "standards" for the approval of teacher education programs, these qualifications/experiences become guides to evaluation or accreditation. Would-be teacher education evaluators or researchers would do well to consult the "Statement" as a base on which to develop innovative evaluation instruments.

Bob Caldwell has emphasized Steve Judy's observation that good teachers' qualities seem to be as varied as teachers' personalities. On the other hand, certain teaching conditions seem to correlate with good teachers, according to Applebee's 1977 report. Such surveys and informed observations provide at least some form of teacher evaluation. Further, the Council has published monographs on testing (National Assessment. . . and Common Sense. . .) and reviews of tests (published and unpublished) that do help those involved in assessing student progress directly or indirectly as a reflection of teacher influence.

Another example of a larger effort to get at teacher effectiveness is a fairly recent (1974) joint publication of the National Conference on Research in English and the NCTE ERIC clearinghouse, Teacher Effectiveness in Elementary Language Arts. It offers several reviews of research that point to effective behaviors and reading, speaking, writing, etc. at the elementary level. Again, the reviews and bibliographies provide backgrounds which should be useful to those who might develop large scale evaluations of teaching behavior in the subject areas of English.

These several illustrations of efforts outside and prior to the formation of this CEE Commission indicate that English educators are concerned in many ways with the evaluation of the preparation of English teachers. And one of the reasons we don't have more involvement is, I believe, that we are all only too much aware of the need to control variables; too much aware of the narrowness and unreliability of available measurements; and we are, at the same time, fully aware of the varied nature of our subject matter and the possibility that teaching our subject, in some respects, may still be an art.

With this caution, therefore, English educators must rely on general studies of teacher effectiveness for the little we know about evaluating teachers and for designs or models for research on English teacher preparation. The Handbooks and Encyclopedias and Summeries of educational research and evaluation are particularly helpful, at least in suggesting possibilities. They tell us, for instance, that the assessment categories we are interested in include the following:

- 1) Teacher knowledge/attitude
- 2) Teacher behavior/performance
- 3) Student knowledge/attitude

4) Student behavior/performance

Some researchers also classify the variables to be studied as presage (teacher knowledge, attitude, etc.), process (teacher performance, teacher-student interaction), and product (student outcomes as in numbers 3 + 4 above). The assumption here, of course, is that there are relationships among the variables, that one effects the others and is, in turn, influenced. Whatever the classification scheme, the aim and chief difficulty in evaluating teaching preparation programs (in all fields but particularly English) is isolating and controlling a small enough number of factors to determine what effects what.

Many general studies have been conducted and summarized (Dunkin and Biddle, Heath and Neilson) including an array of them (14) in the Spring 78 Journal of Teacher Education. Until recently though, most reviewers of teacher effectiveness research have characterized it as barren. In a November 78 Kappan article, however, N. L. Gage noted that we could reach at least tentative conclusions from the multitude of general effectiveness studies if we emphasize their overlapping conclusions and minimize their individual flaws in design. Such a reinterpretation permits "scientifically based" and such widely accepted conclusions as. . .

Lecture is superior to discussion when facts are recalled but inferior when retention or "higher' level" thinking is required. Similarly, when direct and open styles of teachings are compared, direct seems to be superior for student achievement but not really different for attitudes.

These are but two of the examples Gage cites; but with this more "open" interpretation of results, that is, looking beyond statistical

significance, there seems to be a need for considerable more re-interpretations and perhaps new studies begun with an application to English specifically. And to that end, this commission, with Caldwell's urging, has identified a slightly different set of categories around which to classify reviews of studies and by which to organize new studies.

1. The teacher's formative experiences which are made manifest in his/her teaching behavior;
2. Teaching "performance" or the study of observable teaching behaviors;
3. Teacher effects or observed increases in student achievement;
4. Conditions existing within the learning environment;
5. Immediate and long range effects on learners.

Our conclusion is, I believe at this time, that the potential for evaluation in English teacher preparation offers at least something on which this Commission can base its work.

L. Ramon Veal
CEE Convention
Pittsburgh, March 79

REFERENCES

- Applebee, A. N. A Survey of Teaching English, 1977. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1978.
- Butler, R. J. A comparative appraisal of the University of Georgia Secondary English education evaluation procedures and the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Test in Communicative Arts. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, 1978.
- Caldwell, R. C. A position paper on researching in English teacher preparation. CEE, 1978.
- Dunkin, M. J., & Biddle, B. J. The study of teaching. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1974.
- Gage, N. L. Evaluating ways to help teachers behave desirably. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), Competency assessment, research, and evaluation: A report of a national conference. Houston, Texas, March, 1974.
- Gage, N. L. The yield of research on Teaching, Phi Delta Kappan. November, 1978.
- Glatthorn, A. A. Creating learning environments in J. R. Squire (Ed.). The Teaching of English. Chicago, Chicago Press, 1977
- Heath, R. W., & Nielson, M. A. The research bases for performance-based teacher education. Review of Educational Research, Fall 1974, 44 (4), 463-484.
- Houston, W. R. & Howsam, R. B. Competency-based teacher education: Progress, problems, and prospects. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1972.
- Journal of Teacher Education. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Washington, D. C., Spring, 1978.
- Madley, D. M., Soar, R. S., & Soar, R. Assessment and research on teacher education: Focus on PBTE (PBTE Series No. 17). Washington, D. C.: AACTE, June 1973.
- National Council of Teachers of English Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification. A statement on the preparation of teachers of English. English Education, Summer 1976, 7 (4), 195-210.
- O'Donnell, R. C. A survey of research in the teaching of English, Volumes 1-10, Studies in Language Education, Athens, Georgia: July 1977.
- Rosenshine, B., & Furst, N. Research on teacher performance criteria. In B. O. Smith (Ed.), Research in teacher education: A symposium. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971, 37-72.
- Teacher Effectiveness in elementary language arts. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1974.